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Turns out our answer on this math question was right
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Several people who read Thursday's math problem on the front page Wednesday called or e-mailed to say we - and the **National Assessment of Educational Progress** - got the sample question wrong.

We appreciate your concern. But the answer we got from the NAEP was correct. We double checked it with the Boise School District's math supervisor, Rainey Pieters.

The correct answer to the question, reprinted at right, is $1.43. Here is how you get it:

The median is a middle number in a series of numbers. Half the other numbers are lower than the median; half are higher. But when you have just four numbers to choose from, there is no middle number. So what do you do?

You arrange the numbers in ascending order: $1.36, $1.41, $1.45, and $1.57. Then you take the two middle numbers - $1.41 and $1.45 - and add them together and divide by two. The average of those two numbers gives you the median, a middle number of $1.43.

If the string of prices given had included a fifth number, say $1.44, it would be easier to determine the median; half the prices are lower than $1.44 and half are higher. That's the more typical way people think of a median, but the other is correct, too.

Still not persuaded? Check out a fun, visual explanation at www.mathsisfun.com/median.html.

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Eighth grade problem from 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress:

The prices of gasoline in a certain region are $1.41, $1.36, $1.57, and $1.45 per gallon. What is the median price per gallon for gasoline in this region?

(A) $1.41 (B) $1.43 (C) $1.44 (D) $1.45 (E) $1.47